

December 31, 2008

Subject: Request for Oregon Native American RBEG proposals

Dear friend of rural Native American business development in Oregon!

USDA Rural Development-Oregon is now seeking concept papers for our Rural Business Enterprise Grant (RBEG) program for projects that will assist Native American business development.

We are contacting Native American organizations separately because special rules apply to tribal RBEG applicants which increase their chance of success.

[Note that this RBEG solicitation is separate and distinct from other grant opportunities that we have sent recently via e-mail – i.e., the general RBEG concept paper request and the general and Native American Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG) concept paper requests.]

#### THE RBEG PROGRAM & THE NATIVE AMERICAN SET-ASIDE:

Through our RBEG program, USDA Rural Development (RD) provides grant funds for PRECISELY-TARGETED technical assistance, training, feasibility studies, and other activities that support the development of SPECIFICALLY-IDENTIFIABLE small business enterprises in rural areas. Eligible applicants are nonprofits, public bodies, and tribes.

Every year, RD reserves a portion of its RBEG funding for Native American projects. These are projects where at least 75% of the benefits of the project will be received by members of a Federally Recognized Native American Tribe. Alternatively, the beneficiary of the RBEG project may be a tribally-owned business venture.

#### DEADLINE!

If you are interested, please review the following guidance and submit a proposal as outlined below by March 2, 2009.

#### EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW:

Everything you need to know about the RBEG program and to respond to this opportunity is available on RD-Oregon's RBEG web site:

[www.rurdev.usda.gov/or/rbeg.htm](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/or/rbeg.htm)

## FUNDS AVAILABLE:

Although the exact amount is not yet known, it is likely that this year there will be about \$2.7 million of Native American RBEG funds available for award via a single national competition (roughly the same amount as last year).

Native American RBEG applications from Oregon compete with other Native American RBEG applications from around the nation. There is no Oregon state set-aside for this program. Based on past experience, 1-4 Native American RBEG grants may be awarded to Oregon applicants.

In 2008, 25 separate Native American RBEG's were awarded nationally for a total of \$3.2 million, with grants ranging from \$30,000 to \$499,915. Oregon tribes received 4 of these RBEG awards totaling \$495,284, ranging in size from \$97,384 to \$199,000.

## TYPES OF PROPOSALS WE ARE SEEKING:

Because Native American RBEG funding is more plentiful, you need not limit your concept paper proposal to \$25,000 or less. However, do bear in mind that your application will have to compete against tribes from across the US, and applications seeking less than \$100,000 are typically the most competitive.

Technical assistance/problem-solving proposals are encouraged over real estate and revolving loan fund projects.

In developing your proposal, please pay particular attention to the priority scoring system described in the "RBEG program overview" link on our web site. It is used by USDA to select among RBEG applicants. Design your project to maximize your project's priority score and thereby improve your prospects of success.

Note that in order to be competitive, a minimum 1:1 match with nonfederal funds is advised.

In FY2009, USDA's State Director discretionary points will be awarded to projects emphasizing:

- » Downtown and historic-district revitalization
- » Value-added agriculture
- » Telecommunications
- » Minority business development
- » Rural health care
- » Energy efficiency or renewable energy projects
- » New and creative approaches to rural business development

### A CONCEPT PAPER IS REQUESTED:

Since it is likely that only one to four RBEG grants can be awarded to Oregon applicants, instead of seeking detailed, complete applications, we are only requesting a brief “concept paper” from prospective applicants. This will save everyone time and effort while still allowing USDA to survey the field of candidate projects.

The RBEG “Concept Paper” can be downloaded from our RBEG web site (see above). Please be succinct and clear in completing it. When finished, a “Concept Paper” should not need to be more than 2 pages, and no advantage will be given to longer proposals. Remember, we are soliciting concepts, not full RBEG application packages.

### DEADLINE FOR CONCEPT PAPERS:

Your RBEG “Concept Paper” should be submitted to the Oregon Rural Development State Office – preferably by e-mail to [jeff.deiss@or.usda.gov](mailto:jeff.deiss@or.usda.gov) – by not later than March 2, 2009. If you wish to send it by regular mail, our address is: USDA Rural Development, Attn: Business & Cooperative Programs, 1201 NE Lloyd Blvd., Ste. 801, Portland, OR 97232.

Feedback will be provided to all Concept Paper proposers. Only proposals that appear to be most competitive will be encouraged to submit full applications, though of course everyone will still be welcome to apply formally.

### THE APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS

The official deadline for a full RBEG application for the Native American set-aside will be announced in the near future in the Federal Register. We do not yet know the deadline for applications, but in 2008 the deadline was April 16.

Full RBEG applications will need to be received in our office by this to-be-announced deadline, and these will be forwarded on to the national competition.

USDA Rural Development’s National Office will probably make award announcements sometime this summer.

### QUESTIONS?

If you have questions or concerns, please contact anyone on Oregon’s Business & Cooperative Programs staff. Our contact information is on-line at:  
<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/or/bizcontact.htm>

Thanks for your efforts in Oregon rural business development. We look forward to working with you on your innovative proposals!